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mountainous portions of the West. Such topics as the effect of slope exposure and deforestation are here for the first time clearly discussed.

Of course, among the multitude of contributions now appearing annually there are very many highly meritorious papers. But the above three would seem to have first set a high standard each of its kind.

The sympathies of the Cooper Club will go out to our fellow member, Mr. W. F. Dean, of Three Rivers, who recently suffered severe losses through a fire at his home. Mr. Dean's extensive egg collection was destroyed, as well as some mounted mammal heads and birds, a large collection of photographs, and many other objects acquired in his years of natural history collecting. In spite of the discouragements of this disaster, however, he expresses the firm intention of once more beginning the building up of another collection along similar lines.

The Club is indebted to Mr. L. E. Wyman for the compiling of the annual membership roster appearing in this issue, an arduous task as those who have labored at it can testify. This list shows a present membership of 7 honorary, 11 life, and 560 active members. It is requested that any mistakes or omissions be promptly reported to the secretary of either division of the Club.

#### THE CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATED SOCIETIES FOR THE CONSERVATION OF WILD LIFE

Most readers of THE CONDOR are familiar with the story of the organization of the California Associated Societies for the Conservation of Wild Life, and with its activities since its formation. It has taken honorable and active part in two strenuous campaigns for the protection of wild life within California, and has aided and abetted in certain other movements for conservation within the state and elsewhere. Nowhere else, as far as known to the writer, is there another organization like it. Although it has not been in the heat of the battle during the past year, it nevertheless stands as a ready instrumentality, not only to put the quietus on any reactionary legislation which might be proposed, but to assist in any measure, public or private, state or national, which may be deemed desirable. It is fair to say that the organization stands as a large and potentially important item in California's program of preparedness in caring for those natural

resources with which she has been so bountifully endowed.

It should be a matter of interest and pride to members of the Cooper Ornithological Club that the initiative in the original organization and launching of the Associated Societies was taken by this organization. At the present time the following members of the Club are members of the Executive Committee of the conservation organization, of which committee they constitute a majority: William Frederic Badé, President, representing the Sierra Club; Barton Warren Evermann, Vice-president, and Joseph Grinnell, representing the California Academy of Sciences; Charles A. Kofoid, representing the Biological Society of the Pacific; and Tracy I. Storer, Secretary-Treasurer, officially representing the Cooper Club.

According to the letterhead of the Associated Societies the organization exists "To promote an intelligent appreciation of nature, and to establish a wise policy of conservation through education and legislation." Legitimate fields of activity are numerous, and comprise not alone the promotion of desirable legislation affecting wild life in California, but the support of national measures, such as those for the protection of migratory birds, the establishment of additional federal game preserves, the creation of new national parks and the more efficient administration of those now existing, the coördination of the work of the scientific expert and of those responsible for the actual administration of wild life.

I feel sure that the present policy of the organization contemplates the conservation of the scientific collector, though formal expression of this has never been put on record. The obstacles and difficulties which hedge about the activities of the collector are already sufficiently numerous to insure against any appreciable abuse of such privileges as may be accorded him. On the other hand, the first hand acquaintance which he forms with nature is of great value, and often suffices to transform him into a fighting conservationist.

The present writer desires to express his sincere appreciation of the interest and assistance of Cooper Club members so cordially extended during the period of his incumbency as representative of the Cooper Club on the Executive Committee of the Associated Societies. If he might make a suggestion, it would be that Cooper Club members take occasion to mention their interest in the organization and that for

which it stands to their official representative on the Executive Committee, President Tracy I. Storer of the Northern Division. Mr. Storer adds the duties of the Secretary-Treasurership of the Associated Societies to a program already overfull; he will be bearing the brunt of whatever labor is performed; and in the performance of such labor, he will be giving effect to those words which stand among the objects of the Cooper Club itself: "For the conservation of birds and wild-life in general, for the sake of the future."—WALTER P. TAYLOR, *Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

#### PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

##### SOME PUBLICATIONS OF THE BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY DURING 1915.

Under the title "Some common birds useful to the farmer"<sup>1</sup> Professor Beal presents a bulletin of general information concerning the relation of our commonest land birds to the agricultural interests. While superseding Farmers Bulletin no. 54, a publication along similar lines of which upwards of half a million copies were distributed, the present paper is somewhat different in style. It is rather broader in treatment, giving more of distribution and general habits, and less of detail concerning food habits. It is to be hoped that this paper will do as much good as its predecessor did in arousing interest and spreading information concerning the value of our native birds.

During the summer of 1914 the Biological Survey, assisted by about two hundred voluntary observers, took a "Preliminary census of the birds of the United States"<sup>2</sup> by means of sample censuses in different parts of the country. The number of reports was entirely too small and they were unevenly distributed; nevertheless the reports as compiled by Professor Cooke are very interesting. From the relatively larger numbers of birds reported as nesting about dwellings and in cultivated areas, the author surmises that the bird population of the country as a whole could be considerably increased through a wider extension of protection, and by various other means.

<sup>1</sup>Some common birds useful to the farmer. By F. E. L. Beal. U. S. Dept. Agric., Farmers' Bull. 630, pp. 1-27, 23 figs. in text. Issued Feb. 13, 1915.

<sup>2</sup>Preliminary census of the birds of the United States. By W. W. Cooke. U. S. Dept. Agric., Bull. 187, pp. 1-11. Issued Feb. 11, 1915.

Mr. McAtee has now published three papers dealing with food plants suitable for attracting ducks and other Anatidae. His present contribution<sup>3</sup> discusses eleven additional groups of water plants of which representatives have been found in duck stomachs. Brief accounts of the life histories and habits of these plants are given, as also instructions for collecting and transporting them.

For several years Great Salt Lake, Utah, has been the seat of a duck disease similar to that reported by Clarke (*CONDOR*, xv, 1913, pp. 214-226) from a California locality. In the summer of 1914 Mr. Wetmore investigated conditions at the lake and later studied the situation at Tulare and Owens lakes in California. His report<sup>4</sup> gives a brief history of the disease at and about Great Salt Lake and an account of the investigation. He discusses the various theories which have been put forth to explain the malady, and the means which have been found useful in its control and prevention. An abundance of fresh water seems to be the most efficient agent.

Professor Beal's two papers on the food habits of the Robins and Bluebirds<sup>5</sup>, and of the Thrushes<sup>6</sup> together give us a concise yet authoritative account of the food of all members of the thrush family (Turdidae) occurring in North America north of Mexico.

As a group these birds are found to be mixed feeders, taking both animal and vegetable materials, but not always in the same proportions. The robins and the Townsend Solitaire are predominantly vegetarian in their food preferences, the latter being notably a berry feeder, while the former in times of scarcity of wild food is found to take considerable quantities of cultivated fruit, as for example olives. The thrushes (genus *Hylocichla*) and the bluebirds, include a much larger proportion of animal material in their food. This is

<sup>3</sup>Eleven important wild duck foods. By W. L. McAtee. U. S. Dept. Agric., Bull. 205, pp. 1-25, 23 figs. in text. Issued May 20, 1915.

<sup>4</sup>Mortality among waterfowl around Great Salt Lake, Utah. By Alex Wetmore. U. S. Dept. Agric., Bull. 217, pp. 1-10, pls. I-III. Issued May 26, 1915.

<sup>5</sup>Food of the robins and bluebirds of the United States. By F. E. L. Beal. U. S. Dept. Agric., Bull. 171, pp. 1-31, 2 figs. in text. Issued Feb. 5, 1915.

<sup>6</sup>Food habits of the thrushes of the United States. By F. E. L. Beal. U. S. Dept. Agric., Bull. 280, pp. 1-23, 2 figs. in text. Issued Sept. 27, 1915.